

Cap'n Warren's Wards

By Joseph C. Lincoln

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CHAPTER XIII.

A Rock or a Lighthouse.

THUS Captain Elisha entered another of New York's "circles," that which centered at Mrs. Hepton's boarding house. Within a week he was as much a part of it as if he had lived there for years. At lunch, on the day of his arrival, he made his appearance at the table in company with Pearson, and when the landlady exultantly announced that he was to be "one of our little party" thereafter he received and replied to the welcoming salutations of his fellow boarders with unflinching serenity.

The captain paid frequent visits to the offices of Sylvester, Kuhn & Graves to Pine street. Upon the senior partner, whom he esteemed and trusted not only as a business adviser but a friend, he depended for information concerning happenings at the Warren apartment.

Caroline sent him regular statements of her weekly expenditures, also bills for his approval, but she had written him but once, and then only a brief note. The note brought by a messenger accompanied a package containing the chain which he and Pearson selected with such deliberation and care at the Fifth Avenue Jeweler's. Under the existing circumstances, the girl wrote, she felt that she did not wish to accept presents from him and therefore returned this one.

After Pearson had departed one morning Captain Elisha put on his hat and coat and started for his lawyer's office. Sylvester was glad to see him and invited him to lunch.

"No, thank you," replied the captain. "I just run down to ask if there was anything new in the office. Last time I see you, you hinted you and your mates had sighted something or other through the fog, and it might turn out to be a rock or a lighthouse, you couldn't tell which. Made up your mind yet?"

Sylvester shook his head. "No," he said slowly, "it is still foggy. We're busy investigating, but we're not ready to report."

"Humph! Well, what's the thing look like? You must be a little nigher to it by now."

The lawyer tapped his desk with a pencil. "I don't know what it looks like," he answered. "That is to say, I don't—I can't believe it is what it appears at this distance to be. If it is it is the most—"

He paused. Captain Elisha waited for him to go on and when he did so asked another question.

"The most what?" he demanded. "Is it likely to be very bad? Ain't discovered any more of those Cut Short bonds, have you?"

The bonds to which he referred were those of a defunct Short Line railroad. A large number of these bonds had been discovered among A. Rodgers Warren's effects. Part of his "tangled assets," the captain had termed them, differentiating from the "tangle" variety.

"Ah, my housekeeper, has been writin' me," he went on, "about havin' the sewin' room papered. She wants my advice concernin' the style of paper. Says it ought to be pretty and out of the common, but not too expensive. I judge what she wants is something that looks like money but ain't really worth more than ten cents a mile. I've been thinkin' I'd send her a bale or so of those bonds. They'd fill the bill in those respects, wouldn't they?"

Sylvester laughed. "They certainly would, captain," he replied. "No, we haven't unearthed any more of that sort. And, as for this mystery of ours, I'll give you the answer, if it's worth giving at all, in a very short time. Meanwhile you go home and forget it."

"Well, I'll try. But I guess it sticks out on my face like a four days' toothache. But I won't worry about that. You know best whether to tell me now or not, and—well, I'm carryin' about all the worry my tonnage'll stand as 'tis."

He drew a long breath. Sylvester regarded him sympathetically. "You mustn't take your nephew's and niece's treatment too much to heart," he said.

"Oh, I don't—that is, I pretend I don't. And I do try not to. But I keep thinkin' and wonderin' if 'twould have been better if I hadn't gone there to live at all. Hi hum! A man of my age hadn't ought to mind what a twenty-year-old girl says or does, especially when her kind, advisin' friends have shown her how she's been deceived and hypocritized. By the way, speakin' of hypocrites, I suppose there's just as much 'dunnin'' as ever goin' on up there."

"Yes, a little more, if anything, I'm afraid. Your niece and Mrs. Dunn and her precious son are together now so constantly that people are expecting—well, you know what they expect."

"I can guess. I hope they'll be disappointed."

"So do I, but I must confess I'm fearful Malcolm himself isn't so wise, but his mother is—"

"A whole book of Proverbs, hey? I know. She's an able old frigate. I did think I had her guns spiked, but she turned 'em on me unexpected. I thought I had her and her boy in a close hitch. I knew something that I was sartin sure they wouldn't want

Caroline to know, and she and Malcolm knew I knew it. Her tellin' Caroline of it, her story of it, when I wasn't there to contradict, was as smart a piece of maneuverin' as ever was. It took the wind out of my sails, because, though I'm just as right as I ever was, Caroline wouldn't listen to me nor believe me now."

"She'll learn by experience."

"I don't mind so much Caroline's belin' down on me," resumed the captain. "She'll know better some day, I hope, and if she don't—well, I'm only a side issue in her life, anyhow, have in by accident, like the section of dog collar in the sassage. But I do hope her learnin' by experience won't come too late to save her from what she'll be awful sorry for by and by."

"It must," declared the lawyer, with decision. "You must see to it, Captain Warren. You are her guardian. She is absolutely under your charge. She can do nothing of importance unless you consent."

"Yup; that's so, for one more year, just one, remember. Then she'll be of age, and I can't say 'Boo! And her share of Bij's money'll be hers too. And don't you believe that that fact has slipped Sister Dunn's memory. I ain't on deck to head her off now. If she puts Malcolm up to gettin' Caroline to give her word and Caroline gives it—well, I know my niece. She's honorable, and she'll stick to her promise if it runs her on the rocks. And her majesty Dunn knows that too. Therefore, the cat belin' away, she cal'lates now's the time to make sure of the cheese."

"But the cat can come back. The song says it did, you know."

"Um-hm! And got another kick, I shouldn't wonder! However, my claws'll stay sharp for a year or thereabouts, and if it comes to a shindy there'll be some tall scratchin' afore I climb a tree. Keep a weather eye on what goes on, won't you?"

"I will. You can depend on me."

"I do. And, say, for goodness' sakes, put me out of my misery regardin' that rock or lighthouse on Bij's chart soon's ever you settle which it is!"

"Certainly! And, remember, don't worry. It may be a lighthouse or nothing at all. At all events, I'll report very soon."

But in spite of his promise Sylvester did not report during the following week or the next. Meanwhile his client tried his best to keep the new mystery from troubling his thoughts and succeeded only partially. The captain's days and evenings were quiet and monotonous. He borrowed a book or two from Mrs. Hepton's meager library, read, walked a good deal, generally along the water front, and wrote daily letters to Miss Baker. He and Pearson were together for at least a portion of each day. The author, fighting down his dejection and discouragement, set himself resolutely to work once more on the novel, and his nautical adviser was called in for frequent consultation. The story, however, progressed but slowly. There was something lacking. Each knew what that something was, but neither named it.

One evening Pearson entered the room tenanted by his friend to find the latter seated beside the table, his shoes partially unlaced and a pair of big slippers ready for putting on.

"Captain," said the visitor, "you look so comfortable I hate to disturb you."

Captain Elisha, red faced and panting, desisted from the unlacing and straightened in his chair.

"Whew!" he puffed. "Jim, your remarks prove that your experience of the world ain't as big as it ought to be. When you get to my age and



"The cat being away, she cal'lates now's the time to be sure of the cheese."

wait measure you'll realize that stoopin' over and comfort don't go together. I hope to be comfortable pretty soon, but I shan't be till them boots are off. Set down. The agony'll be over in a minute."

Pearson declined to sit. "Not yet," he said. "And you let those shoes alone until you hear what I've got to say. A newspaper friend of mine has sent me two tickets for the opera to-night. I want you to go with me."

Captain Elisha was surprised. "To the opera?" he repeated. "Why, that's a—sort of singin' theater, ain't it?"

"Yes, You're fond of music; you told me so. And 'Aida' is beautiful. Come on. It will do us both good."

"Hm! Well, I don't know."

The captain looked at his caller's evening clothes.

"What do you mean by gettin' ready?" he asked. "You've got on your regimentals, open front and all. My uniform is the huntin' case kind; fits in better with church sociables and South Denboro no' theaters. If I wore one of those vests like yours Abbie'd make me put on a red flannel lung protector to keep from catchin' pneumonia. And she'd think 'twas sinful waste besides, runnin' the risk of spillin' a clean billed shirt so quick. Won't I look like an undertaker sittin' alongside of you?"

"Not a bit. If it will ease your mind I'll change to a business suit."

"I don't care. You know how I feel. We had a little talk about hats a spell ago, you remember. If you're willin' to take me 'just as I am, without a plea,' as the hymn tune says, why, I cal'lates I'll say 'yes' and go. Set down and wait while I get on my ceremonials."

The pair walked over to Broadway, boarded a street car and alighted before the Metropolitan Opera House. Pearson's seats were good ones, well and in the orchestra. Captain Elisha turned and surveyed the great interior and the brilliantly garbed audience.

Pearson brought a copy of the libretto, and the captain followed the performance with interest.

"Say, Jim," he whispered, with a broad grin, "it's a good thing this opera idea ain't carried into real life. If you had to sing every word you said 'twould be sort of distressin', 'special' if you was in a hurry. A fast rate solo when you was orderin' the crew to shorten sail would be a high old brimstone anthem, I'll bet you."

The foyer had its usual animated crowd, and among them Pearson recognized a critic of his acquaintance. He offered to introduce the captain, but the latter declined the honor, saying that he "cal'lates" he wouldn't shove his bows in this time. "You heave ahead and see your friend, Jim," he added. "I'll come to anchor by this pillar and watch the fleet go by. I'll have to write Abbie about all this. She'll want to know how the femal craft was rigged."

Left alone, he leaned against the pillar and watched the people pass and repass just behind him. Two young men passed just behind him. He could not help overhearing their conversation.

"I presume you've heard the news?" asked one casually.

"Yes," replied the other, "I have—that is, if you mean the news concernin' Mal Dunn. The matter learned it this afternoon and sprang it at dinner. No one was greatly surprised. Formal announcement made and all that sort of thing, I believe. Mal's to be congratulated."

"His mother is, you mean. She managed the campaign. The old lady is some strategist, and I'd back her to win under ordinary circumstances. But I understand these were not ordinary; wise owl of a guardian to be circumvented or something of that sort."

"From what I hear the Dunns haven't won so much after all. There was a big shrinkage when papa died, so they say. Instead of three or four millions it panned out to be a good deal less than one. I don't know much about it because our family and theirs have drifted apart since they moved."

"Humph! I imagine whatever the payout it will be welcome. The Dunns are dangerously close to the ragged edge; everybody has been on to that for some time. And it takes a few ducks to keep Mal going. He's no Uncle Russell when it comes to putting by for the rainy day."

"Well, on the whole, I'm rather sorry for—the other party. Mal is a good enough fellow and he certainly is a game sport, but—"

They moved on and Captain Elisha heard no more. But what he had heard was quite sufficient. He sat through the remainder of the opera in silence and answered all his friend's questions and remarks curtly and absently.

As they stepped into the trolley Pearson bought an evening paper, not the Planet, but a dignified sheet which shunned sensationalism and devoted much space to the doings of the safe, sane and ultra respectable element. Perceiving that his companion for some reason did not care to talk, he read as the car moved downtown. Suddenly Captain Elisha was awakened from his reverie by hearing his friend utter an exclamation. Looking up, the captain saw that he was leaning back in his seat, the paper lying unheeded in his lap.

"What's the matter?" asked the older man anxiously.

Pearson started, glanced quickly at his friend, hesitated, and looked down again.

"There it is," he said. "Read it."

Captain Elisha took the paper, drew his spectacle case from his pocket, adjusted his glasses and read. The item was among those under the head of "Personal and Social." It was what he expected. "The engagement is today announced of Miss Caroline Warren,

daughter of the late A. Rodgers Warren, the well known broker, to Mr. Malcolm Corcoran Dunn of Fifth Avenue. Miss Warren, it will be remembered, was one of the most charming of our season before last's debutantes and"—etc.

The captain read the brief item through.

"Yes," he said slowly, "I see." Pearson looked at him in amazement. "Are you going to permit her to marry that—that fellow?"

"Well, I ain't sartin that I can stop her."

"My God, man! Do you realize—and she—your niece—why?"

"There, there, Jim! I realize it all, I cal'lates. It's my business to realize it."

"And it isn't mine. No, of course, it isn't. You're right there."

"Hold on!" commanded the captain. "Hold on, Jim! Don't you go off half cocked. When I said 'twas my business to realize this thing I meant just that and nothin' more. I wa'n't hintin', and you ought to know it. You do know it, don't you?"

The young man paused. "Yes," he answered, after an instant's struggle with his feelings; "yes, I do. I beg your pardon, captain."

"Sort of knocked you on your beam ends, I understand. Well, Jim," with a sigh, "I ain't exactly on an even keel myself."

CHAPTER XIV.

"Now We're Comin' to the Rock."

NINE o'clock is an early hour for a New York lawyer of prominence to be at his place of business. Yet when Captain Elisha asked the office boy of Sylvester, Kuhn & Graves if the senior partner was in he received an affirmative answer. Sylvester welcomed him gravely.

He pushed an electric button on his desk. The office boy answered the ring.

"Have Mr. Kuhn and Mr. Graves arrived?" asked the lawyer.

"Yes, sir; both of them, sir."

"Tell them Captain Warren is here, and ask them to join us in the inner room. Remind Mr. Graves to bring

As They Stepped Into the Trolley Pearson Bought an Evening Paper.

the papers. And, Tim, remember that none of us is to be disturbed. Do you understand?"

"Yes, sir," said Tim and departed.

Captain Elisha regarded his friend with some dismay.

"Say," he exclaimed, "this must be serious if it takes the skipper and both mates to handle it!"

Sylvester did not smile. "It is," he answered. "Come!"

He led the way into the room opening from the rear of his own. It was a large apartment with a long table in the center. Mr. Kuhn, brisk and businesslike, was already there. He shook hands with his client. As he did so Graves, dignified and precise as ever, entered, carrying a small portfolio filled with papers.

The four took chairs at the table. Graves untied and opened the portfolio. Captain Elisha looked at his solemn companions, and his lips twitched.

Sylvester took a card from his pocket and referred to a pencilled memorandum on its back.

"Captain Warren," he began slowly, "as you know, and as directed by you, my partners here and I have been engaged for months in carefully going over your brother's effects, estimating values, tabulating and sorting his various properties and securities, separating the good from the worthless, and there was, as we saw at a glance, a surprising amount of the latter."

"Um-hm," interrupted the captain, "cut short bonds and the like of that, I know. Excuse me, go on."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Ever See a Dingonek?

The dingonek is a huge, unclassified aquatic monster, says the Wide World Magazine. It resembles in many of its characteristics the extinct dinosaur, a huge reptile of the Mesozoic period, fossils of which have been discovered by paleontologists in the sandstone strata both of the African and American continents. It lives in Lake Victoria Nyanza and its numerous tributaries and there is no record of the monster having been seen in any other part of the world. Whether it is a descendant of one of the huge prehistoric saurians that has by a process of adaptation—living as it does in impenetrable regions far away from the encroachments of civilized man—continued with but slight modifications through prodigious ages to the present time, or whether it is an unclassified reptile or amphibian, it is equally impossible to say, as no specimen exists either of its bones or of its skin. That this monster does exist, however, there can be no particle of doubt, as the testimony of authoritative eyewitnesses cannot be reasonably discredited.

Temperance Notes

(Conducted by the National Woman's Christian Temperance Union.)

ISN'T IT QUEER!

It clubs him while at work and he loses his job.

It clubs him on the head and sends him to the insane hospital.

It clubs him in the stomach and he has the delirium tremens.

It clubs him in the home and his home is broken up.

It clubs him in the pocketbook and leaves nothing there.

It clubs him in his liberty and throws him into jail.

With its final blow it throws him into an early grave.

Certainly the poor man's club.

—The Connecticut Citizen.

ALCOHOL A DECEIVER.

The experimenter took three substances for the experiment—food, alcohol and hot water. After taking the food he found the heat in the interior of the body increased as the food digested—the organs of the body became filled with warm blood, and the internal temperature became considerably raised. At the same time he found the surface of the body became cold. Hot water and hot tea raised the internal temperature and external temperature, but when he took alcohol a curious thing occurred. When he took it, diluted, of course, it gave him a feeling of warmth. It was the first time he had taken any for many years, and he felt that feeling of warmth, with the result that he asked himself whether they had not been making a mistake all these years, if there was really an increased temperature within the body? When the temperature record was developed, however, it showed that at the very period he had thought his inside was being warmed by the alcohol just the reverse was taking place. The surface temperature had risen considerably, but the internal temperature had gone down. Alcohol was a deceiver. There was no doubt about it in regard to temperature. The actual temperature was falling at the time he thought it was rising. This proved that men taking alcohol before going into the night air were doing a very unwise thing, and possibly preparing themselves to be chilled.—Prof. Sim Woodhead, M. D., University of Cambridge, England.

THE SALOON THE POOR MAN'S WORST ENEMY.

All of a poor man's wealth is invested in his children. The poor man sacrifices his whole life to raise his children and hopes that when they grow up they will be a help to him in his old age. If the rich man's children go to the bad the rich man still has money to support him, but when the poor man's children go to the bad all his wealth is lost and he is left in his old age to a life of misery. The saloon is an institution that robs the poor man of his children and he ought to be against it even more than the rich man.

The rich men will not live where there are saloons. They will have their land deeds fixed up so that no saloons can be established, or they will have laws made to bar out saloons. Some Christian people ease their consciences by having laws made to keep the saloons away from the church doors; but when you drive the saloons away from the rich man's home and the doors of the church, you drive them to the homes of the poor people—the least able of all to withstand their ravages. The poor man cannot drive the saloon away from his door with money, like the rich man, for he has not the money; but he has a vote, and with that vote he can, and should, drive the saloon away from his door.—John F. Cunneen.

HOW THE BREWERS "REFORM" THE SALOONS.

The breweries control 4,952, or 70 per cent, of the licensed saloons of Chicago; own 2,232, or 34 per cent, of the licenses, and own the fixtures in 4,689 saloons, or 67 per cent of the total number. Some of the most notorious dives in Chicago have been under the actual or practical supervision of the Anheuser-Busch Brewing company.

When Mr. Busch issued his statement that the beer interests were going to reform the liquor trade, Federal Judge Landis was considering cases of several brewery agents. When he was told that the Anheuser-Busch Brewery association controlled 33 saloons in East St. Louis, Judge Landis said:

"Here are thirty-two saloons confessedly managed by Mr. Busch's company, and they have been steadfastly breaking the law for at least ten years." Turning to the clerk, the judge said: "I want you to make a transcript of the cases I have tried in this court and send it by special delivery to Mr. Busch; I think it will do him good."

BARLEY AS FOOD OR WASTE?

"When barley is taken to the miller, 80 per cent becomes flour for human food; 40 per cent becomes offal for cattle food."

"When barley is taken to the brewer, 25 per cent only becomes offal for cattle food; 75 per cent is wasted in making a deleterious drink."—Lord Devonport.

EFFICIENCY.

Abstinence is necessary for the highest efficiency.—Admiral Sir John Jellicoe.

HUSBAND SAVES WIFE

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SIMPLY HAD TO BE DONE

Hungry Diner Forced to Strenuous Action to Secure the Only Relief in Sight.

Speaking at a political meeting Congressman Allen T. Treadway of Massachusetts referred to wartime economy and fittingly related this little anecdote:

One afternoon a man went into a restaurant and selected an Irish stew from the bill of fare. Soon the dish was placed before him, and after giving it a critical glance he removed his coat, then his vest and then his collar and necktie.

"What in the world are you trying to do, mister?" demanded the wondering waiter as the patron reached down to untie his shoes. "This isn't bed-time."

"A casual glance, young man," responded the patron, "should suffice to show you that I am removing my clothes."

"But—but," objected the waiter, "you can't remove your clothes in here."

"I can't swim with them on," answered the patron, pointing to the stew, "and swim this ocean of water I must in order to reach yonder tiny island of mutton."—Philadelphia Telegraph.

"All Out."

One day a rent collector knocked three times at a certain house, without even once getting a reply. Becoming enraged, he went back a fourth time, and in response to his knock an urchin opened the door. "Where were you all day?" demanded the collector. "I was out," replied the boy. "Where is your father?" "He's out." "Where is your mother?" "She's out." "Well," said the collector, "I will just go in and sit at the fire until some one of them returns." "But the fire's out, too," quickly responded the boy.

Had Well Remembered.

Little Beth's mother had been cautioning her little folks about taking risks of contracting sore throats or contagious diseases from their playmates last winter, and when a little freckled-faced girl from next door ran in munching a tempting looking apple and offered Beth a bite she shook her head and sidled up to her mother, saying: "I don't want to take any of her apple, because I am afraid I might get freckles."

Yes, Rafalo, our alphabet has endured for ages, though used only for a spell.

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